

## 1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

## 2 DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

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4 )  
5 ) In Re: Bair Hugger Forced Air File No. 15-MD-2666  
6 ) Warming Devices Products (JNE/FLN)  
7 ) Liability Litigation )  
8 ) ) January 18, 2018  
9 ) ) Minneapolis, Minnesota  
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10 ) ) Courtroom 12W  
11 ) ) 9:30 a.m.  
12 ) )  
13 ) )  
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14 BEFORE THE HONORABLE JOAN N. ERICKSEN  
15 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

16 THE HONORABLE FRANKLIN L. NOEL  
17 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

18 **(STATUS CONFERENCE)**

19 **APPEARANCES**

20 **FOR THE PLAINTIFFS:**

21 MESHBEKER & SPENCE  
22 Genevieve M. Zimmerman  
23 1616 Park Avenue  
24 Minneapolis, MN 55404

25 CIRESI CONLIN  
Michael Sacchet  
225 South 6th Street  
Suite 4600  
Minneapolis, MN

KENNEDY HODGES, LLP  
Gabriel Assaad  
4409 Montrose Blvd  
Suite 200  
Houston, TX 77006

1 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (cont'd):

2 KENNEDY HODGES, LLP  
3 David W. Hodges  
4 711 W. Alabama Street  
5 Houston, TX 77006

6 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (APPEARING BY PHONE:)

7 PRITZKER HAGEMAN, P.A.  
8 David J. Szerlag  
9 Wendy Thayer  
10 45 South 7th Street, #2950  
11 Minneapolis, MN 55402-1652

12 GROSSMAN & MOORE, PLLC  
13 Emily A. DeVuono  
14 Jennifer Moore  
15 Elizabeth Coulter  
16 Mary Oost  
17 401 W. Main Street  
18 Suite 1810  
19 Louisville, KY 40202

20 HARE WYNN NEWELL & NEWTON  
21 Don McKenna  
22 Peggy Little  
23 Lynne Reed  
24 Massey Building  
25 2025 Third Avenue North  
Suite 800  
Birmingham, AL 35203

26 MCEWEN LAW FIRM, LTD  
27 Melissa Schmid  
28 5850 Blackshire Path  
29 Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

30 MORGAN & MORGAN, PA  
31 Heather Cullen  
32 Joseph T. Waechter  
33 Michael Goetz  
34 201 N. Franklin St 7th Floor  
35 Tampa, FL 33602

1 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (appearing by phone):

2 RAIZNER SLANIA, LLP  
3 Jeffrey L. Raizner  
4 Rica Rinosa  
5 Erin Stracener  
6 Amy Hargis  
7 Kriten Gorombol  
8 2402 Dunlavy Street  
9 Houston, TX 77006

10 LONCAR & ASSOCIATES  
11 William Hymes  
12 John L. Coveney  
13 424 S. Cesar Chavez Blvd  
14 Dallas, TX 75201

15 CAPRETZ & ASSOCIATES  
16 Don K. Ledgard  
17 5000 Birch St, Suite 2500  
18 Newport Beach, ca 92660

19 DAVIS & CRUMP, PC  
20 Martin D. Crump  
21 Robert D. Cain, Jr.  
22 Wes Stevenson  
23 2601 Fourteenth Street  
24 Gulfport, MS 39507

25 LEWIS & CAPLAN  
26 Amy Webster  
27 3631 Canal Street  
28 New Orleans, LA 70119

29 THE RUTH TEAM  
30 Steven C. Ruth  
31 Austin Grinder  
32 842 Ramond Avenue  
33 Suite 200  
34 Saint Paul, MN 33733-5157

35 LAW OFFICES OF TRAVIS R. WALKER  
36 Travis R. Walker  
37 Julie Treacy  
38 Felissa McHardy  
39 Rebecca Strum  
40 1235 SE Indian Street  
41 Suite 101  
42 Stuart, FL 34997

1 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (appearing by phone) :

2 ANDREWS & THORNTON  
3 Anne Andrews  
4 John Thornton  
5 Lauren Davis  
6 Lila Razmara  
Marco Galindez  
Todd Rudometkin  
2 Corporate Park, Suite 110  
Irvine, CA 92606

7 JOHNSON BECKER PLLC  
8 Rolf T. Fiebiger  
444 Cedar Street  
9 Suite 1800  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

10  
11 LORD & ASSOCIATES  
Priscilla Lord  
309 Clifton Avenue  
12 Minneapolis, MN 55403

13 MURRAY LAW FIRM  
Caroline Whitney Thomas  
650 Poydras Street  
14 Suite 2150  
New Orleans, LA 70130

15 BROWN & CROUPPEN, PC  
Abby Cordray  
211 North Broadway, Suite 1600  
16 St. Louis, MO 63102

17 BEASLEY ALLEN  
Megan Robinson  
Renee Lindsey  
Matthew Munson  
218 Commerce Street  
Montgomery, AL 36104

18 HOLLIS LEGAL SOLUTIONS, PLLC  
Scott Hollis  
6814 Crumpler Boulevard,  
22 Suite 101  
Olive Branch, MS 38654

1 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (appearing by phone):  
2

3 FITZGERALD LAW GROUP, LLC  
4 Kevin Fitzgerald  
120 Exchange Street  
Suite 200  
Portland, ME 04101  
5

6 MESHBESHER & SPENCE, LTD  
Holly Sternquist  
1616 Park Avenue  
7 Minneapolis, MN 55404  
8

9 PARKER WAICHMAN, LLP  
Nicole Eisner  
Michael S. Werner  
Giselle Grant  
10 59 Maiden Lane  
6th Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
11  
12

13 NEAL R. ELLIOTT, JR.  
P.O. Box 80136  
Baton Rouge, LA 70898  
14

15 NASH & FRANCISKATO LAW FIRM  
Brian Franciskato  
Amanda Cryderman  
2300 Main Street, #170  
16 Kansas City, MO 64108  
17

18 BAILEY PEAVY BAILEY COWAN  
HECKAMAN, PLLC  
Justin Jenson  
The Lyric Centre  
19 440 Louisiana Street  
Suite 2100  
Houston, TX 77002  
20  
21

22 LANGDON & EMISON  
Brett Emison  
Rachel Ahmann  
23 Lauren Niendick  
Tricia Campbell  
911 Main Street  
24 Lexington, MO 64067  
25

1 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (appearing by phone):

2 THE WEBSTER LAW FIRM  
3 Chelsie Garza  
4 6200 Savoy Suite 150  
5 Houston, TX 77036

6 LAW OFFICES OF JAMES S. ROGERS  
7 James S. Rogers  
8 BJ Bennett  
9 Annaliese Abbey  
10 Heather Cover  
11 1500 4th Avenue #500  
12 Seattle, WA 98101

13 LEVIN PAPANTONIO  
14 Ben Gordon  
15 316 S. Baylen Street  
16 Suite 600  
17 Pensacola, FL 32502

18 THE OLINDE FIRM, LLC  
19 Wesley G. Barr  
20 Alfred Olinde, Jr.  
21 400 Poydras Street  
22 Suite 1980  
23 New Orleans, LA 70130

24 SANDERS PHILLIPS GROSSMAN  
25 Randi Kassan  
100 Garden City Plaza  
Suite 500  
Garden City, NY 11530

BERNSTEIN LIEBHARD LLP  
Dae Lee  
10 East 40th Street  
New York, NY 10016

DEGARIS LAW GROUP, LLC  
Annesley DeGaris  
2 North 20th Street  
Suite 1030  
Birmingham, AL 35223

HOUSSIERE DURANT & HOUSSIERE  
Randall A. Kauffman  
Monica Vaughan  
Shirley Strom-Blanchard  
1990 Post Oak Blvd Suite 800  
Houston, TX 77056

1 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (appearing by phone):  
2 GOZA & HONNOLD, LLC  
3 Lisa Joyce  
11181 Overbrook Road, Suite 200  
Leawood, KS 66211

4 COLLING GILBERT WRIGHT &  
CARTER, LLC  
5 Lisa Thomas  
6 Melvin Wright  
The Florida Firm  
801 N. Orange Avenue  
7 Suite 830  
Orlando, FL 32801

8 RILEY & JACKSON, P.C.  
9 Jeremiah Mosley  
Keith Jackson  
10 Mary Malea Sellers  
3530 Independence Drive  
11 Birmingham, AL 35209

12 SKIKOS CRAWFORD SKIKOS &  
JOSEPH, LLP  
13 Matt Skikos  
Julie Tucci  
Darilyn Simon  
14 Dylan Jensen  
One Sansome Street, Suite 2830  
15 San Francisco, CA 94104

16 THE WHITEHEAD LAW FIRM, LLC  
17 Anna Higgins  
C. Mark Whitehead, III  
Eric Mausner  
18 Petroleum Tower, Suite 303  
3639 Ambassador Caffery Pkwy  
19 Lafayette, LA 70503

20 TATE LAW GROUP, LLC  
21 Mark Tate  
Nikki Jackson  
22 2 East Bryan Street  
Suite 600  
23 Savannah, GA 31328

24 THE MILLER FIRM, LLC  
25 Tayjes Shah  
108 Railroad Avenue  
Orange, VA 22960

FOR THE PLAINTIFFS (appearing by phone):

JOHNSON JOHNSON & SCHALLER PC  
Leslie O'Leary  
Brenda Steinle  
975 Oak Street  
Citizens Building, Suite 1050  
Eugene, OR 97401

MARTIN HARDING & MAZZOTI, LLP  
Rosemarie Bogdan  
1222 Troy-Schenectady Road  
P.O. Box 15141  
Albany, NY 12212-5141

RICHARDSON PATRICK WESTBROOK &  
BRICKMAN, LLC  
Daniel Haltiwanger  
Missi Cruz  
PO. Box 1368  
Barnwell, SC 29812

RIEDERS TRAVIS HUMPHREY WATERS  
& DOHRMANN  
Deborah Bueno  
161 West Third Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701

PETERSON & ASSOCIATES, P.C.  
Brian Emerson Tadtman  
801 W. 47th Street, Suite 107  
Kansas City, MO 64112

LOCKRIDGE GRINDAL NAUEN PLLP  
Yvonne Flaherty  
Elizabeth Peterson  
100 South Washington Avenue  
Suite 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

ALBERT BROOKS FRIEDMAN LTD  
Albert B. Friedman  
Kelly Lopez  
161 N. Clark Street  
Suite 2575  
Chicago, IL 60601

1 FOR THE DEFENDANTS 3M:

2 BLACKWELL BURKE P.A.  
3 Ben Hulse  
4 Corey Gordon  
5 Mary Young  
6 Peter Goss  
7 431 South Seventh Street  
8 Suite 2500  
9 Minneapolis, MN 55415

7 FAEGRE BAKER DANIELS  
8 Bridget M. Ahmann  
9 90 South Seventh Street  
Suite 2200  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

10

11

Court Reporter:

MARIA V. WEINBECK, RMR-FCRR  
1005 U.S. Courthouse  
300 South Fourth Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415

12

13

14

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## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (9:55 a.m.)

3 THE COURT: Good morning. Please be seated.

4 Judge Leary is unable to join us today because of  
5 a legal problem. He no longer has any business here.

6 Do we have our people on the phone? Let's see.

7 Would someone on the phone say something?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning, Your Honor.

9 THE COURT: Thank you very much. We've been  
10 discussing the bellwether back and forth, and it struck us  
11 that it might be best to go through the non-bellwether  
12 matters that are on the agenda for today. And then,  
13 counsel, if you would come back and then we can have an  
14 informal discussion about what's the best way to proceed on  
15 the bellwether process. So that's what we've been doing and  
16 that's how we will proceed.17 So let's just turn right to the joint agenda. And  
18 skipping over the bellwethers, we come to the motions to  
19 dismiss. Mr. Hulse, do you want to take the lead on that?

20 MR. HULSE: I will, Your Honor. Thank you.

21 THE COURT: I'll tell you what I've got drafted up  
22 here. And then maybe you can let me know how that...

23 MR. HULSE: Very good. And good morning.

24 THE COURT: And good morning to you. We're  
25 missing some people. Okay, where is your colleague?

1 MR. HULSE: Mr. Blackwell is in trial.

2 THE COURT: Is he up with that Starkey thing I've  
3 about reading about?

4 MR. HULSE: No, it's a California trial. L.A.  
5 Superior Court.

6 THE COURT: Is this the one where he got called in  
7 at the last minute?

8 MR. HULSE: They all fit that bill.

9 MAGISTRATE JUDGE NOEL: I think this is one where  
10 it's warmer in California than it is in Minnesota, and so  
11 should I go to the status conference in Minnesota or the  
12 trial in California?

13 MR. HULSE: He does have impeccable timing in his  
14 trial assignments when it comes to the weather. This one  
15 Your Honors may know that with L.A. Superior Court, you  
16 don't know what courthouse you're going to be in until  
17 you're actually called for trial. So you just have to sort  
18 of book a centrally located hotel and hope it's close.

19 THE COURT: Sounds like a good idea if you want to  
20 torture the jury. Okay. So that's him. Ms. Zimmerman?

21 MS. ZIMMERMAN: Thank you, Your Honors. You may  
22 notice we have fewer people here as well. Mr. Gordon is a  
23 victim of the snowstorm through Atlanta, which has basically  
24 shut down that airport. And Ms. Conlin is covering a  
25 deposition for one of here partners whose wife unexpectedly

had their baby early, so she sends her regrets her as well,  
but she's taking a deposition that she is hopefully now  
prepared for in New York.

4 MAGISTRATE JUDGE NOEL: Okay, thank you.

THE COURT: All right. So I have a draft order here with respect to Grooms, Johnson, Gilbert Garcia, Gruetzmacher, Maria Garcia, Petrakis, Sellers, Allen Graves, Morris, Maxheimer, Saylor, and Schapansky. That excludes Prince, so my thought was we find out whether the issue with the lawyer switch, whether they ever heard -- whether Prince is going to go forward separately.

12                   But on the others, I have a plan here to deny the  
13 motions to dismiss as moot with respect to Morris and  
14 Schapansky on the grounds that I think those are taken care  
15 of without court intervention.

16 MR. HULSE: That's correct, Your Honor.

17                   THE COURT: And then denying without prejudice to  
18 renew on Gruetzmacher and Maria Garcia and that has to do  
19 with the identification. Maria Garcia is identified as  
20 Guzman, and Gruetzmacher's case is listed as 17CV00988, even  
21 though it's 998.

22 | MR. HULSE: Right, that is a typo.

23                   THE COURT: So I just thought we would deny it for  
24 now and give you a chance to fix it up and make sure that we  
25 still want to do that. And then dismiss with prejudice

1 Grooms, Johnson. That's 17CV640. Grooms was 343. Gilbert  
2 Garcia, that's 711. Petrakis is 1082. Sellers is 17CV1879.  
3 Allen, 2738. Graves, 2747. Maxheimer, 2763. And Saylor,  
4 2892. That's my proposal. I don't know if that saves you  
5 any time.

6 MR. HULSE: You've left me with nothing to say,  
7 Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Okay. So, Ms. Zimmerman, I guess I'm  
9 to you. This is my draft here. Do you have any problems  
10 with that?

11 MS. ZIMMERMAN: I think that given Your Honor has  
12 clarified that the motions are denied on Morris and  
13 Schapansky and that they have the opportunity to fix the  
14 typos on Maria Garcia, and is it Gruetzmacher? I think that  
15 that is the remainder of consistent with what we've heard.

16 I know that the responses that were filed in  
17 response to the Defendant's motion to dismiss were only by  
18 three firms. One was the Prince matter. I don't know if  
19 Bernstein Liebhard is on the phone. It's my understanding  
20 anyways though that a PFS has been served now and that that  
21 issue I think is off the table.

22 THE COURT: Okay. So I've unmuted the phone. Can  
23 we hear from counsel representing the plaintiff in the  
24 Prince matter? Okay, somebody, even if you don't represent  
25 them, can you say something so that I'm sure the reason I'm

1           not hearing anything is that the lawyer is not there as  
2           opposed to there being some technological issue.

3           MS. THOMAS: Yes, Your Honor. Lisa Thomas from  
4           Colling Gilbert Wright & Carter. Can you hear me?

5           THE COURT: Okay, I hear something so thank you.

6           MS. ZIMMERMAN: And my understanding, Your Honor,  
7           then is that the Bernstein Liebhard firm did respond to the  
8           motion to dismiss and indicated that the fact sheet was  
9           served on January 12 of this year. I think that there was  
10          at least some issue with respect to the client retaining two  
11          firms, and my understanding anyways is that the Bernstein  
12          Liebhard firm response asks that the case not be dismissed.

13          If the other responses that were filed all  
14          indicated that the plaintiffs, despite the plaintiffs' firms  
15          best efforts were nonresponsive, and I know that there was  
16          one firm or one case that the Kennedy Hodges firm represents  
17          the plaintiffs is Sellers, and they have requested in their  
18          response a 60-day extension to get the plaintiff fact sheet  
19          completed, and to the extent that they have anything to add  
20          to that I'm sure that they will.

21          THE COURT: Okay, and is that 1879?

22          MS. ZIMMERMAN: Yes, that's 1879, Your Honor.

23          MR. ASSAAD: Your Honor, we have nothing to add.  
24          We have been unable to reach the client. We would ask for  
25          60 days.

1                   THE COURT: Very well. Well, then this morning I  
2 will sign this order that we've got.

3                   MR. HULSE: Thank you, Your Honor.

4                   THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Hulse.

5                   Okay, now, update on the number and status of  
6 cases?

7                   MS. YOUNG: Nothing to add there from the  
8 defendants.

9                   MS. ZIMMERMAN: And, Your Honor, from the  
10 plaintiffs' perspective, I was provided this updated number  
11 from the David Szerlag at the Pritzker firm. As of  
12 yesterday, there are 4,466 active federal Bair Hugger cases  
13 pending in this MDL. So about another 260 or so odd cases  
14 since this report went in.

15                  THE COURT: All right. And overview of related  
16 state proceedings other than the Minnesota one? We do miss  
17 Judge Leary I must say.

18                  MS. AHMANN: Your Honor, I don't think we have  
19 anything to add other than what is in the papers. The  
20 Rodriguez case is still on for trial, but we're going to be  
21 working with the parties and the Court to get that moved.

22                  THE COURT: Let me know if you need any help.

23                  MS. AHMANN: We'll keep that in mind.

24                  MS. ZIMMERMAN: And, Your Honor, the plaintiffs  
25 have nothing to add other than we intend to appeal but.

1                   THE COURT: And nothing to add on the other state  
2 cases?

3                   MS. ZIMMERMAN: Correct.

4                   THE COURT: Is that true of Canada as well?

5                   MS. YOUNG: Yes, Your Honor, nothing to add.

6                   MS. ZIMMERMAN: Yes, Your Honor.

7                   THE COURT: Item Number 6, pretrial orders, I  
8 don't have anything.

9                   MS. ZIMMERMAN: The only proposals, Your Honor,  
10 with the competing proposals on the bellwether repopulation,  
11 and we'll discuss that with Your Honors.

12                  THE COURT: Yes. Is there anything else that we  
13 should discuss while we're all here together?

14                  MR. GOSS: Hello, Your Honor. Peter Goss here.  
15 We have an issue with respect to Dr. Elgobashi.

16                  MAGISTRATE JUDGE NOEL: Can I just interrupt for a  
17 second? Either speak into the microphone on the table or  
18 come up to the podium because the folks on the phone I think  
19 are not hearing you.

20                  MR. GOSS: Thank you. So the parties have worked  
21 out the deposition date with respect to Dr. Elgobashi. It  
22 looks like we're going to forward on Saturday, February  
23 10th. And then Dr. Abraham, who is the defense fluid  
24 dynamic expert, he can go on the 15th. So we've got the  
25 deposition dates set.

1                   The bigger issue is that Dr. Elgobashi is working  
2                   on a new CFD, and this one will be tailored to the Model  
3                   505. His first CFD that we reviewed in the Daubert hearings  
4                   involve the Model 750. The Model 505 has appreciably lower  
5                   air flow. So we've been informed that he's working on a new  
6                   CFD, that there is going to be a supplemental report. We  
7                   don't know when we're going to get it.

8                   THE COURT: If I remember, Dr. Elgobashi's report  
9                   from before, it takes a long time to put these together.

10                  MR. GOSS: Right, it does, and knowing that it was  
11                  going to take a long time, it's our position that while they  
12                  knew that they were going to have some 505 cases, and they  
13                  should have done this earlier, the reports were due on  
14                  November 27th, we put in our rebuttal reports on  
15                  December 16th. If we get a new CFD, we're going to need  
16                  some time for our expert to look at it, rebut it, and we're  
17                  very concerned that we're just not going to be able to hold  
18                  to the May 14th trial date if that happens. So our position  
19                  is that new CFD is untimely and ought not to be supplemented  
20                  for the Gareis case.

21                  THE COURT: Is Gareis a 505?

22                  MR. GOSS: Yes, Your Honor.

23                  THE COURT: Oh, no. All right, we'll talk more  
24                  about that when we're talking about the bellwethers, shall  
25                  we?

1                          MR. GOSS: That sounds great, Your Honor. Thank  
2                          you.

3                          MS. ZIMMERMAN: Your Honor, may we respond at  
4                          least briefly?

5                          THE COURT: Yes.

6                          MS. ZIMMERMAN: So with respect to Dr. Elgobashi's  
7                          CFD, Your Honors have heard much evidence and argument about  
8                          the admissibility and reliability and relevance of his  
9                          reports. I will say that Dr. Elgobashi's report initially  
10                        on general causation addressed generally and principally the  
11                        750, but his report also addressed the 505. What was  
12                        actually put through the super computer was the 750.

13                        And I will also update the Court that as of  
14                        January 9th, his paper was accepted for peer review  
15                        publication in the International Journal On Numerical  
16                        Methods in Biomedical Engineering, so his report is now a  
17                        peer reviewed publication as of last week.

18                        THE COURT: Well, we'll deny summary judgment  
19                        then.

20                        MS. ZIMMERMAN: Thank you. So at any rate, he did  
21                        serve his original general causation report. And just to  
22                        kind of recite the basic schedule or time frame to remind  
23                        the Court, the Gareis scheduling order came out on the 20th  
24                        of October. We then had a three-day hearing the next week,  
25                        and there was some argument about whether we might be able

1 to put additional numbers into this super computer. And so  
2 given the argument and the questions from the Court,  
3 Dr. Elgobashi started in early November putting all of the  
4 same kind of numbers into the super computer to do the same  
5 calculations for this LES CFD modelling.

6 As the Court is aware, it certainly takes a great  
7 deal of time and the super computer, as I understand it, you  
8 have to petition for time on these big machines. And from  
9 the scientific community standpoint, you also have to  
10 explain why your project merits use on these super  
11 computers. His project is considered to have already been  
12 solved because of the initial project on the 750. But so he  
13 now is using a different super computer. It's slightly  
14 slower. He has some preliminary reports back, and we expect  
15 that the final modelling with the videos will be available  
16 sometime in February, and he will supplement his report as  
17 soon as he's able.

18 But the report that he did serve on November 27th  
19 timely under the Court's scheduling order addressed the  
20 calculations that he made and his opinion with respect to  
21 the 505.

22 MAGISTRATE JUDGE NOEL: Is there any difference in  
23 methodology or anything that he's doing in this report or is  
24 it just different numbers.

25 MS. ZIMMERMAN: It's just different inputs, that's

1       it. That's the only thing that's different. And he has  
2       provided a six-page report, I believe, with respect -- that  
3       includes calculations. I'm sorry, it's a four-page report  
4       with a cover page, so five pages, detailing the calculations  
5       and essentially the boundary conditions and the inputs for  
6       the 505, and what his professional opinion is with respect  
7       to the 505 for Mr. Gareis' case. So that was provided in a  
8       timely manner. The defendants certainly will be able to  
9       depose him on that when it comes up. And if and when they  
10      decide to bring a motion when he has a supplemental report  
11      where they need to take an additional deposition, I presume  
12      that that will be before the Court if and when they decide  
13      to bring that motion. But we don't have a motion before us  
14      right now.

15           I will add that they have submitted supplemental  
16      expert reports on at least four or five of their experts as  
17      well, particularly with respect to this FDA letter that Your  
18      Honor has heard quite a bit about at the hearing in October.

19           THE COURT: It's a different super computer  
20      though, so it's not just different numbers. It's different  
21      numbers arrived at by a different --

22           MS. ZIMMERMAN: Technically, Your Honor, you're  
23      right. But it would be kind of like if I used my Mac or if  
24      I, you know, went and used one of your law clerk's computers  
25      right now, it's still really accessing essentially Microsoft

1 Word.

2 THE COURT: Right, except that the information  
3 we've had from him before talked a lot about that particular  
4 super computer, and so what you're telling me now is that  
5 that's not the one that he's using -- did you want to say  
6 something?

7 MR. ASSAAD: Your Honor, I'm going to --

8 MS. ZIMMERMAN: So he was using the new numbers  
9 but the same exact equations that have been provided and  
10 disclosed in that they were run on a different computer, but  
11 the calculations are still being done in the same exact  
12 fashion, just by a different computer.

13 THE COURT: Okay.

14 MAGISTRATE JUDGE NOEL: Is it the plaintiffs'  
15 intent to call Dr. Elgobashi live at the Gareis trial or to  
16 offer deposition or video or something?

17 MS. ZIMMERMAN: We intend to call him live, Your  
18 Honor.

19 THE COURT: Mr. Assaad, did you want to say  
20 something about that? You seem very exercised about it, so  
21 I want to be able to give you a chance to --

22 MR. ASSAAD: Well, just from a technical  
23 standpoint, Your Honor, the super computer only solves the  
24 problems. It's not different equations. It's not different  
25 algorithms. The only thing that's changing to the 750 and

1       the 505 is one number, just one number, which is the flow  
2       rate. It's a slower flow rate. Everything else is  
3       identical, and the preliminary results so far are identical.  
4       The only difference is instead of taking 26 seconds, it's at  
5       40 seconds. The only change.

6                  MS. ZIMMERMAN: We did bring copies of  
7       Dr. Elgobashi's published peer review article, if the Court  
8       would like to receive one. I have one for defense counsel  
9       as well. I don't know if they've seen it yet, I'd be happy  
10      to offer those to them.

11                 THE COURT: I don't need it right now.

12                 MR. GOSS: Could I have just one response?

13                 THE COURT: Yes.

14                 MR. GOSS: So just to be clear on what  
15       Dr. Elgobashi said in his November 27th report, he expressed  
16       that the result with the 505 will be the same, that it will  
17       just take more time. And I understand that that's what he  
18       expects. People, odds makers expect the Vikings to win in  
19       Philadelphia on Sunday, I hope, but that's why we play the  
20       game, and so we don't know what's going to happen until we  
21       see it happen and that's what we want to see.

22                 And the basis for our motion is not going to be a  
23       rehash of what's wrong with the inputs with respect to the  
24       temperature, velocity, it's actually going to be specific to  
25       the Gareis OR, which had some very unique air flow features,

1 and we're hearing for the first time that those aren't  
2 accounted for in this model. We're going to need time to  
3 explore this with him in order to bring our case specific  
4 Daubert motion. And, again, I'm concerned that if we get a  
5 report in mid-February, then we bring a Daubert motion, you  
6 know, as soon as we can after that, it's still going to  
7 effect our trial date of May 14th.

8 THE COURT: Nothing else for us to say about that  
9 right now, I don't think.

10 All right. We will then conclude the hearing and  
11 that frees up the folks who are on the phone. And, counsel,  
12 please come back to chambers so that we can make a plan for  
13 the bellwether repopulation. We're in recess.

14 (Court adjourned at 10:16 a.m.)

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18 I, Maria V. Weinbeck, certify that the foregoing is  
19 a correct transcript from the record of proceedings in the  
20 above-entitled matter.

21

22 Certified by: s/ Maria V. Weinbeck

23

Maria V. Weinbeck, RMR-FCRR

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